

EPHESIANS

Two divisions:

- 1-3: - The Work of God. Doctrine. "Our High Calling in Christ"
- 3-6: - The Walk of the Believer. Practice, Responsibility. "Walk Worthy of Calling"

Theme of the Book - Christ the Head of the Church

4:1 - the bridge

OUR HIGH CALLING IN CHRIST			OUR RESPONSIBILITY - WALKING WORTHILY	
1. Blessing	2. Experiences	3. Prayer for Growth	4. Walk in Unity .. Difficultly	5. Walk in Love .. Lightly .. Carefully

Paul - "in his theological chapters he never forgets the practical, and in his practical passages his exhortations are always linked up to great truths."

"Do this and live the law commands
 But gives me neither feet nor hands.
 A better song the gospel sings
 It bids me fly and gives me wings"

CHAP. 4

Theme verse: (4:1) Therefore walk worthily.

I. The Christian Walk

A. Walk in unity ^{1. Unity} of the spirit. (a) The secret: humility in love. (cf. Phil. 2:1-11)

(4:1-6)

The Church Invisible

(b) The foundation: 1) one Spirit. One body only as we have the spirit of Christ.

- (2) One Lord - unified command
- (3) One faith.
- (4) One baptism - of the spirit.
- (5) One God

B. Diversity within Unity.

1. Differing gifts of God's grace - ours in trust. What counts is what you do with it. 4:7, 11-12

2. Difficult passage "led captivity captive." 4:8-10

- a. { (a) Held captive sin and death.
(b) Leads us volunteer captives of Christ.

b. Descended into Hades? cf. I Peter. 4:9-10

2. Grow in this unity in Christ. 4:13-16

B. Walk differently. (4:17-32)

— SV's on campus realize not reading foreign students. Why. Jap student replies - "Because we can't tell which of you are kids and which not."

— Wally - converted, stayed buried. Pines, "I do this because I want you & know the old Wally is dead. This is a new Wally." Is baptized.

1. Put off sins - lying, bitterness, stealing etc.
2. Be kind.
3. The great yardstick - as Christ forgave you.

C. Walk in Love. (5:1-7)

D. Walk in Light (5:8-14)

cf. gardening experience. Dig down - horrible crawling things exposed. Scoot back under.

"While you watch and pray against infection from the darkness, shine into it."

vs. 14 - perhaps quotes early Christian hymn.

E. Walk Carefully (5:15)

Redeeming the time = "buying up the opportunity."

II. The Christian Home

A. Wives and husbands. (5:21-33)

1. Subjection of wives safeguarded by husband's love.

B. Children and Fathers. (6:1-4)

1. Obedience of children matched by father's responsibility.

C. Servants and Masters (6:5-9)

Two Principles:

1. Christ is the pattern
2. Mutual respect.

III. The Christian Stand. "The Christian walk demands that we take a stand"

A. Our Defense - the armor of God.

- 1. The girdle of truth - cleaves to a man
- 2. Breastplate of righteousness - covers the heart.
- 3. Sandals of the gospel of peace.
- 4. Shield of faith - Satan attacks with doubt.
- 5. Helmet of salvation
- 6. Sword of the Spirit - the Word of God.

No protection for the back - no preparation for defeat. Stand! Hold your ground.

Your Name _____

Co-operative Bible Study
of
The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Text Book: Preferably the Revised Standard Version
Supplemented with, "The Way and the Wayfarer," by Spivey, 20¢

Other Sources:

The Interpreter's Bible Vol. 10 (section on Ephesians)
God's Order, the Ephesian Letter and This Present Time, by John A. Mackay
Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, by Charles R. Erdman
The Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible (section on Ephesians)
How to Study Ephesians, by Joseph M. Gettys
The Meaning of Ephesians, by Edgar J. Goodspeed
The Whole Armor of God, by Ralph W. Sockman (studies of Eph. 6:10-17)

Study Plan:

This plan of Co-operative Bible Study provides for an instructor for the plenary sessions, and several group leaders each of whom will moderate a section of fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five students.

A plenary session will be held each day for a limited period under the guidance of the instructor, to be followed by section Bible study under the guidance of the group leaders for the remainder of the class period.

This syllabus is intended for use in section Bible study and for outside preparation before coming to the plenary sessions and the section meetings.

THE STUDY GUIDE ON THE SIX CHAPTERS OF EPHESIANS

Introducing Ephesians to the Student

1. The Letter to the Ephesians, perhaps more than any other New Testament writing, laid the theological foundations for understanding the nature of the Christian Church as the body of Christ. (Colossians has a similar message and is closely related to Ephesians in thought and content.)
2. The "mystery of the ages", revealed in this Letter, is that Christ has united in himself all things in heaven and on earth; and the Church is his body to bring this union to consummation. (See the diagram on the last page of this syllabus.) The Interpreter's Bible Vol. 10, p. 607, says: "In this sense the epistle is the first manifesto of Christian imperialism, exhibiting the church as the spiritual empire which must grow until it unites all mankind under the glorious sovereignty of Christ the Lord."

3. Ephesians has given impetus and motivation to unite all races and nations in a brotherhood of worship and love. But this unity can have no hope of realization or permanence unless it is unity in Christ.
4. For our times the Letter says plainly, "Unite or perish." It also describes the nature of the conflict in which believers are engaged; the character of the opposing forces; and the assurance of Christ's participation and power to bring final victory.
5. The key to unlock the message of Ephesians is found in ch. 1:9,10:

"For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."

Introductory Questions About Ephesians

1. To whom was Ephesians written?
2. Why is "at Ephesus" omitted from ch. 1:1 in the Revised Standard Version (and many other versions)?
3. Why do many Bible scholars suggest that a disciple of Paul may have been the writer of Ephesians?
4. What are some of the evidences of Paul's authorship?
5. If Paul was the author, where was he located when writing Ephesians, and when was it written?

Ch.1:1,2 -- The Writer's Salutation

What are the significant words and phrases in these verses that help us to understand the spirit of the writer, and the kind of people for whom the Letter was intended?

Ch.1:3-14 -- A "pronoun" study

1. Underscore all pronouns in this section that refer to Christ.
2. Circle all pronouns that refer to God the Father.
3. Put a square around all pronouns that refer to believers.
4. In what way, if any, has this device helped you to comprehend the construction and meaning of this section of the Letter?

Ch.1:3-14 -- The "mystery" is explained

1. When did God choose "us" (the believers in Christ)?
2. How do believers become sons of God?
3. List the specific things that Christ has done for believers.

4. How is a Christian's inheritance guaranteed?
5. Discover whether all three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in vs.3-14.
6. Note the term "heavenly places" in v.3; it is used five times in the Letter; what do you think it means? (Consult the diagram.)
7. What is this "mystery" (mentioned in v.9)? Think again of everything you have read in vs.3-14; this will help to understand the meaning of the "mystery."
8. Can you think of any ways in which this "mystery" has meaning and relevance for Christians today?

Ch.1:15-23 -- Prayer requests of the writer

1. Note that vs.15-23 is one long sentence--the writer's prayer that his readers may have spiritual understanding of the mystery that has been revealed.
2. List the specific requests that the prayer makes for believers.
3. How is Christ's authority described in this prayer?
4. How is Christ's relationship to the Church described in this prayer?
5. Note the second references to "heavenly places" in v.20.
6. What do these verses say to you in this century?

Ch.2 -- General questions

1. What were the religious backgrounds of the people who were the first readers of Ephesians? (A quick glance over ch.2 will give the answers.)
2. What apparent distinctions does the writer make between Jews and Gentiles? (See the diagram for the Jewish-Gentile divisions of humanity.)
3. Underscore all the pronouns in ch.2 that seem to refer to Jews.
4. Circle all the pronouns that seem to refer to Gentiles.
5. List all the references in ch.2 that seem to have a time connotation. Note the third reference to "heavenly places." (Consult the diagram again.)

Ch.2:1-10 -- How dead sinners are made live believers

1. What did people do to become "dead through the trespasses and sins?"
2. Who is the "prince of the power of the air," and what power has he?
3. What is the meaning of "by nature children of wrath?"
4. What moved God to make sinners alive? Does he move in the same way in our generation?

5. How does God accomplish the transformation of sinners?
6. How are transformed sinners related to Christ?
7. What is the gift that God bestows on sinners?
8. Whose workmanship are transformed sinners?
9. How are good works related to God's grace?
10. What do these verses say to you at this time?

Ch.2:11-22 -- Reconciliation that brings unity

1. What are Gentiles especially to remember?
2. What changes in the meaning of "Gentiles" have taken place since Ephesians was written?
3. In what way were Gentiles "strangers to the covenants of promise?"
4. Explain how Jews were covenant people, whereas Gentiles seem not to have been at first?
5. Why were the Gentiles without hope until Christ came?
6. How did Christ unite Jew and Gentile?
7. What is the name given to the Church in v.19?
8. How is the Church built?
9. How does the Church grow?
10. How is the Church a "holy temple?"
11. Who comprise the Church today?
12. What have you learned from these verses about the nature of the Church?

Questions to Help Summarize the Main Teachings of Chs.1,2

1. What was God's great purpose in sending Christ to earth? See ch.1:10.
2. How has this purpose been accomplished? See ch.1:11-14.
3. What responses are believers to make to this great purpose of God? See ch.1:15-23.
4. Why do believers need to be reminded that they were sinners? See ch.2:1-3.

5. Why do believers need to be reminded that it was grace not works that transformed them from dead sinners to live Christians? See ch.2:4-10.
6. What leads you to believe that this Letter was addressed to an "integrated" church? See ch.2:11-22.
7. What implications do you find in ch.2 for an ecumenical Church?

Ch.3 -- General questions

1. With what words does ch.3 begin. Find the same words again in v.14. Is the meaning of "for this reason" the same in both instances?
2. Note that a dash ends v.1; beginning with v.2 the writer uses a parenthesis that closes with v.13. Read quickly this parenthesis to discover the writer's "insight into the mystery of Christ."
3. Beginning with v.14 and continuing through v.19, note that the language is a prayer; underscore in vs.16,17,18 and 19 the verbs that convey the petitions of the prayer.
4. Why are vs.20 and 21 appropriately called a doxology?

Ch.3:2-6 -- More about the meaning of the mystery revealed to the writer

1. What is the implication of the word "assuming" in v.2?
2. How did Paul obtain knowledge of the mystery referred to in v.3?
3. To what does Paul refer in the words, "as I have written briefly"? V.3.
4. What knowledge has been made available to the Ephesians that was not formerly available to them? Vs.4-6.
5. Why, do you think, is this knowledge called a "mystery"?
6. What are we of the present-day Church to do with this mystery?

Ch.3:7-13 -- About the purpose of the Church

1. What is "this gospel" mentioned in v.7? How did Paul obtain it?
2. Why should Paul be "depreciated" as the "very least of the saints"? V.8.
3. Note the infinitives "to preach" (v.8), and "to make all men see" (v.9); what was the objective of this preaching?
4. How does the Church use the mystery to influence "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (v.10)? See the diagram again. Note that this is the fourth time "heavenly places" has been mentioned; where are the previous references?
5. What was "according to the eternal purpose," and how has this purpose been achieved? V.11.

6. What desirable characteristics are given to the believer in Christ? V.12.
7. What seems to be the purpose of mentioning Paul's suffering? V.13.
8. What have these verses been saying to you?

Ch.3:14-21 -- To understand the prayer petitions, and to appreciate how the answer to this prayer would further the purpose of the Church.

1. In v.14, note that "for this reason" is repeated after being used in ch.3:1; have you decided how to explain "for this reason" in both instances of its use?
2. Who are the "family in heaven?" Who are the family "on earth?" How are these families related to God? V.15.
3. In vs.16 to 19 locate the four specific prayer petitions; how do answered prayers help believers to fulfill the purpose of the Church?
4. Try to put the petition in v.16 in your own words by writing it as a brief prayer.
5. In v.17 (first part), explain how Christ dwells in a human heart.
6. In v.17 (last part) and v.18, explain how power comes to a believer, and what he is to do with this power.
7. What is the meaning of "breadth and length and height and depth?" Last part of v.18.
8. What practical value comes from knowing the love of Christ? V.19.
9. In vs.20,21, do you think that the doxology is a climax to ch.3 only, or to the entire section, chs.1-3? Why do you think so?
10. Try to write a prayer in your own words that includes the content of vs.14-21.
11. What changes would come in the Church as you know it, if this prayer were answered?

Comment on Chs.1-3

The first three chapters of Ephesians give the main theological content of the Letter. The remaining chapters are more practical in that they give specific instructions for daily living. However, we shall discover additional theological teachings in the remaining chapters that enlarge on the main theme of the Letter which is UNITY IN CHRIST--a unity that brings together all things in heaven and on earth--the mystery that has been revealed.

Chs. 4 through 6 -- Direction finder for these chapters

1. The challenge of the writer of Ephesians for the final chapters is stated in ch.4:1:

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called."

The challenge is expressed in a series of encouragements that make the Christian life not only attractive but possible.

These encouragements will be found as follows:

- A. Ch.4:1-16--An encouragement to use the gifts that God has provided for believers, whereby they may build a fellowship (the Church) that is truly one Lord, one faith, one baptism. This unity is not uniformity, but a diversity of talents and gifts directed to the end of "building up the body of Christ."
- B. Chs.4:17 to 5:20--An encouragement to conquer the sins that beset church members so that they will demonstrate the new nature that Christ has given them. The end result is not only individual right living but corporate right living; an entire church "after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness."
- C. Chs. 5:21 to 6:9--An encouragement to families who comprise the Christian fellowship of home and church working together.
- D. Ch.6:10-20--An encouragement to all Christians to wear God's armor of spiritual power that he has provided for them, to wage their conflict against enemies on earth and enemies above the earth.

(Ch.6:21-24 describe the writer's information about Tychicus who carried the letter to Ephesus; and a closing benediction.)

2. In the remainder of the syllabus the same plan will be used of studying the natural sections of the Letter in order to discover both its timely and its timeless teachings.

Ch.4:1-16 -- An encouragement to use the gifts God has given to each of us

1. How can v.1 be used to emphasize what we call now "Christian vocation?"
2. What are the characteristics of a Christian vocation? Vs.2,3.
3. Write in your own words the meaning of "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." V.3.
4. In v.5, explain the meaning of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism."
5. Why does the writer need to emphasize the fact of one God? V.6.
6. Explain how "the measure of Christ's gift" determines the grace that is given to each believer. V.7.
7. What is the writer's purpose (v.8) in quoting from Ps.68:19? Study vs.7-10 to find the answer.)

8. What are some of the gifts bestowed upon Christians? V.11.
9. For what various purposes are these gifts to be used? Vs.12-16.
10. Taking vs.1-16 as a whole, explain how Christians can hope to have unity when they are endowed with so many kinds of talents or gifts that they are encouraged to express to the full.
11. What do vs.1-16 say to you about the possibility of an ecumenical Church?

Chs.4:17 to 5:20 -- Facing up to the individual and corporate sins and vices that Christians must seek to conquer.

1. What were the prevailing sins of unconverted Gentiles of this period? Vs.17-19.
2. What encouragement does the writer offer for Christians to overcome their sins? Vs.20-24.
3. Catalog the sins and vices in vs.25-32 from which Christians must seek to be delivered?
4. If such sins prevailed among the church members of Ephesus, what conclusion do you draw about the kind of people who made up the Early Church?
5. If the writer of Ephesians were addressing a similar letter to a Christian church in the U.S.A., would he be justified in cataloging such sins among church members today? Why do you think as you have answered?
6. In ch.5:1,2, what encouragement and motivation are offered for living a holy life?
7. In ch.5:3-5, what warning is given about the seriousness of certain sins?
8. In vs.6-14, what warning is given to Christians about their association with those who practice "the unfruitful works of darkness"?
9. What principles should guide Christians today in their association with those who flout Christian standards?
10. What is a "foolish" Christian? Vs.15-17.
11. In v.18, what does the writer say about alcohol?
12. In vs.19,20, what light is thrown on the content of early Christian worship?
13. What are some of the sentences or phrases that you want to "salt down" from this section for further study, or for memorizing? What use might you make of them?

14. Do you believe that people in our churches today can be as good as this Letter challenges them to be? Give your reasons.
15. Do you believe that the study of Ephesians has real practical value for church members today? Give your reasons.
16. From your thinking and experience thus far in this study, write down a brief definition of "The Church as the body of Christ."

Chs.5:21 to 6:9 -- An encouragement to families and households

This third encouragement is directed to families in particular: husband and wife; parents and children; masters and slaves. We shall need to remember the social structure of the family and society at this period if we are to appreciate the directives given in Ephesians. Roman sanctions at this period permitted the lordship of the husband over the wife; the parent over the child, and the master over the slave. Christianity infiltrated this structure with new principles, but did not attempt to change the entire structure immediately.

To understand the writer's discussion of family relationships, do not overlook ch.5:21. This is the new infiltration that was used to establish a new relationship between husband and wife, and between all members of the household. If v.21 is referred to constantly the writer will not seem so "harsh" in his attitude toward women.

It is significant that Ephesians recognizes so clearly the necessity of Christian home relationships as the heart of the effective church fellowship. The home, in many respects, is a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church. The emphasis of the Presbyterian curriculum on the home is one attempt to restore the centrality of the home in Christian education.

Ch.4:21-33 -- Husband and Wife

1. In v.21, is "subjection" a one-way or a two-way relationship? What is the motivation for one member of the family to be subject to another?
2. Write a brief paragraph on the meaning of "Christian subjection."
3. In vs.22-24, how would an Ephesian wife interpret her obligations to her husband?
4. How would a Christian wife in the U.S.A. interpret vs.22-24 today?
5. In vs.25-27, how would an Ephesian husband treat his wife if he followed the teaching in these verses?
6. In vs.25-27, how would a Christian husband in the U.S.A. treat his wife if he lived out the spirit of the teachings?
7. In vs.28-33, what is a husband's "golden rule" for Christian married relationships?
8. In v.32, what is the meaning of "This is a great mystery"?
9. In v.33, how do you interpret the words "love" and "respect"?

10. What do you discover from ch.5:21-33 about the relationship between Christ and the Church as a determining principle for guiding husband-wife relationships?
11. What is your present attitude toward the writer of Ephesians for his statements about husband-wife relationships?

Ch.6:1-4 -- Parents and children

1. Underscore all the verbs in these verses to catch the force of the statements.
2. Determine whether v.1 and v.2 say the same thing in different language.
3. How are children motivated to honor and obey their parents? Vs.1-3.
4. In v.4, what special directives are offered fathers (parents) to aid them in the Christian education of their children?
5. What can present-day children and/or young people learn from these verses about their obligations to parents?
6. If parents are not church members, and their children are, do you think that the children are bound to obey their parents and honor them? Give your reasons.
7. What do these verses say to local churches about their program of Christian education?
8. How can missionaries working outside the U.S.A. utilize ch. 6:1-4?

Ch.6:5-9 -- Master-servant relationships

1. What is your first reaction to the word "slaves" as it appears in this New Testament Letter?
2. In v.5, how do you think a slave would interpret the words "obedient" and "fear and trembling"?
3. In vs.5-8, what is the motivation given to slaves to be Christian slaves?
4. In v.9, how do you explain "Masters, do the same to them"?
5. In vs.8,9, how are masters motivated to give Christian treatment to their slaves?
6. Do you think that these verses, ch.6:5-9, have helped to outlaw slavery as an institution? Give your reasons.
7. Do you think it would have been better for early Christianity to have advocated the outlawry of slavery? Give your reasons.
8. Do you think that present-day Christianity should advocate immediate reform of certain unChristian practices in the world? or should it go slowly on reforms that take a long time to effect? Give reasons for your answers.

9. What do you find in ch.6:5-9 that no longer applies to employer-employee relationships?
10. What do you see in ch.6:5-9 that might be used for strengthening the Christian witness in industrial and business relationships in the U.S.A.?
11. How are missionaries outside the U.S.A. trying to apply ch.6:5-9 in the non-Christian cultures in which they are working?

Ch.6:10-20 -- Encouragement to effective use of God's armor

This is the best-known section of Ephesians. Dr. Ralph W. Sockman has recently written a valuable book on this one section alone. The Whole Armor of God. Christians are not victims of fate (as many Ephesians had believed before they were converted to Christ; and as many people still believe in this modern world). People who have subjected themselves to Christ are not helpless to overcome the "horoscope of their unlucky stars." Rather they are given an armor that is complete, and weapons that are effective, to enable them to "withstand" and to "stand." Therefore, with such weapons, and such armor, the Christian has no alibi for defeat. Furthermore, this warfare of the Christian is not an individual affair only, but in his conquering he helps his fellow men to be conquerors. And above all, the warfare of the Christian under God is helping to bring in the day to "unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and things on earth."

1. In v.10, equate the word "finally" with "from now on." What motivation does v.10 give to the Christian who is seeking help to live victoriously?
2. In vs.10-17, underscore all the parts of the armor that are primarily for defense; circle the parts that are particularly for offense, or carrying the fight to the enemy.
3. In your own words, rewrite the description of the Christian's armor. Phillips' Translation of this section may prime your mind for trying it.
4. In v.11, do you think that the term "armor of God" implies that God also wears the same kind of armor in his conflict against evil forces? Give reasons for your answer.
5. In vs.11,12, who are the foes that the Christian must combat?
6. How can the Christian get at the foes who are described as "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"? V.12.
7. In v.13, what ideas are conveyed to your mind by the words "withstand" and "stand"? What is meant by "in the evil day?"
8. Which parts of this gospel armor are you finding most useful in your own Christian warfare?
9. Which parts of this armor, if any, have you been unable to use? Why?

10. In v.18, do you think that prayer is also a part of the armor, or is prayer a means of using the armor? Give reasons for your answer.
11. In v.18, what suggestion comes to you about the way prayer may be used to strengthen all who are fighting for the right?
12. What does the writer mean "and also for me," in v.19?
13. What special prayer does the writer request the Ephesians to offer for him? Vs.19,20.
14. What does ch.6:10-20 as a whole say to you now?

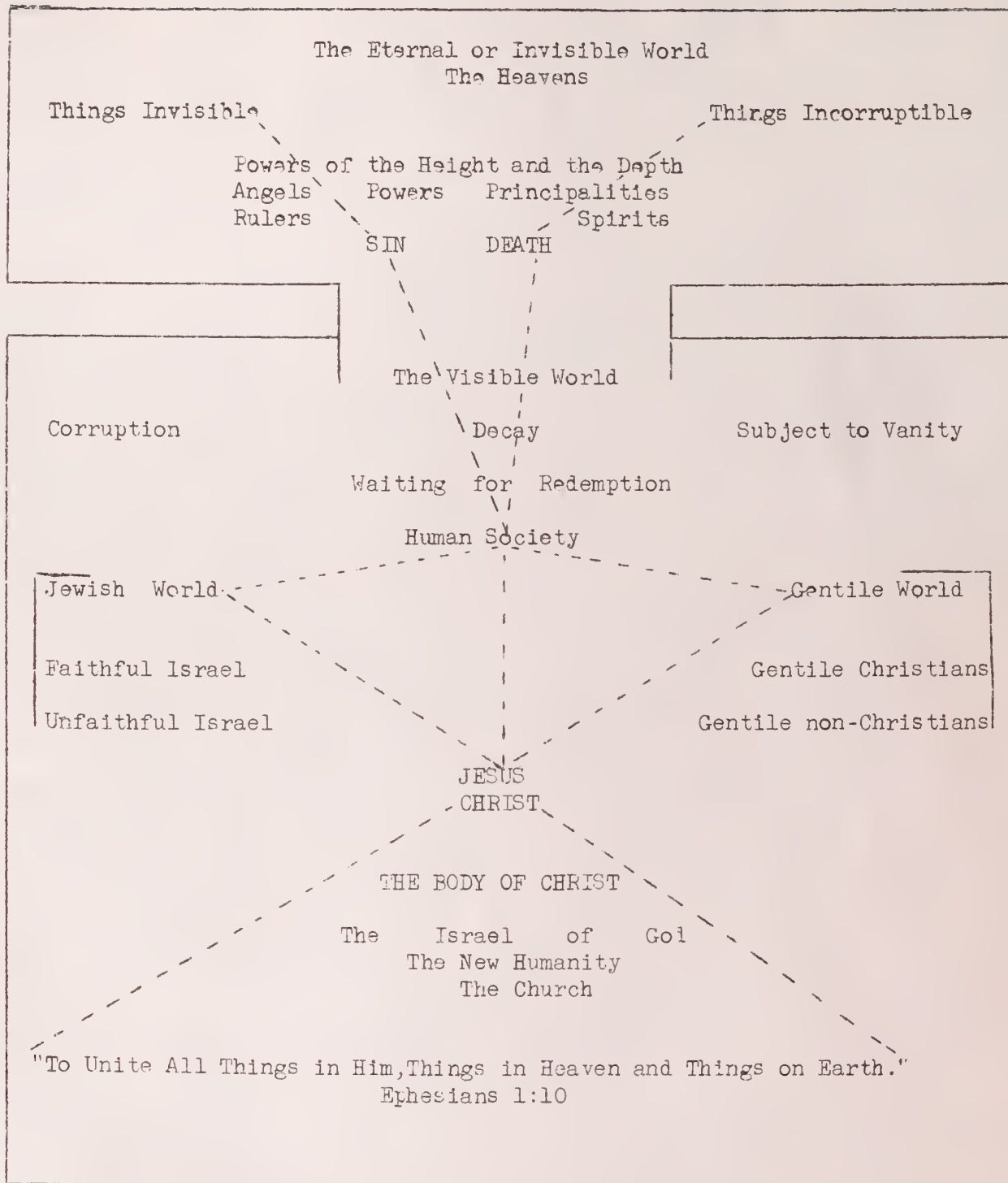
Ch.6:21-24 -- Conclusion to the Ephesian Letter

1. How are the Ephesians to learn about the situation and welfare of the writer? Vs.21,22.
2. Rewrite the benediction in language that might be used by a letter writer at the present time. Vs.23,24.

Six Summarizing Questions on the Ephesian Letter as a Whole

1. What did ch.1 contribute to your understanding of God's eternal plan for the Church? How does the teaching of this chapter make it impossible for any true religion to give Christ any other than the central place?
2. What did ch.2 say to you about the unity of mankind? Why can there be no real unity except in Christ?
3. What did ch.3 demonstrate about the unifying power of Christ to bring mankind into one family of God?
4. How does chs.4:1 to 5:20 aid us in understanding the nature of the sins that must be overcome before we can have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism"?
5. What does chs.5:21 to 6:9 contribute to your understanding of the function of the home in achieving the union of all things in Christ?
6. What does ch.6:10-24 tell you about the kind of conflict Christians must wage for eventual victory over "things in heaven and things on earth"?

THE WORLD VIEW OF EPHESIANS



The "Mystery of the Ages," revealed in Ephesians, promises the ultimate unity of all mankind, and of all things in heaven and on earth. This is accomplished in the work of Christ, who conquered Sin and Death. The final consummation waits but it is certain. The Body of Christ, the Church, is God's agent "To unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."



" Efes Artemisi., heykeli
Statue of " Artemis of Ephesus..

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